DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

VOL. IV NO. 13 JUNE 24th 1955 Price: 15 Pf., 5 c, 3 d

CALL FOR GERMAN DELEGATES TO GENEVA

Representatives of both parts of Germany must be given an opportunity of presenting their views on the solution of the German problem to the Big Four Conference meeting in Geneva on July 18th, the Government of the German Democratic Republic declared on June 16th.

Here is the full text of the Government statement:

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic welcomes the planned meeting of the heads of government of the USSR, USA, Great Britain and France. The Government sees in this meeting new chances of relaxing tension in the international situation, and helping to settle unsolved international problems.

"The chief desire of the Government of the German Democratic Republic and all patriotic Germans is the peaceful solution of the German problem, which would be helped by positive results of the Geneva meeting. The Government of the German Democratic Republic continues to hold the view that the Germans themselves must make the main contribution to the peaceful reunification of Germany, by agreeing amongst themselves on the path which would lead to the creation of national unity for our country on a democratic basis.

"In accordance with the decisions of the People's Chamber the Government of the German Democratic Republic is ready to negotiate at any time with representatives of West Germany on subjects serving the relaxation of tension in Germany and its peaceful reunification. All-German interests demand that the representatives of both parts of Germany should reach agreement on the problem of the peaceful solution of the German question, and that they should work out a joint standpoint on this problem.

"Such negotiations continue to be rejected by the (West German) Federal Government, as West German Foreign Minister Brentano confirmed at a press conference in Bonn on June 14th. By adopting this attitude the Bonn Government is taking up a position more and more distant from the population of West Germany, which calls increasingly energetically for an understanding between the two parts of Germany.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic regards it as obvious that, when the Four Powers negotiate on the German question, the representatives of both parts of Germany should have the opportunity of presenting their standpoints on German reunification and the German contribution to securing peace.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic expects that the representatives of both parts of Germany will be given this opportunity. The necessary preparations will be made to send a delegation to the conference which will present the views of the Government of the German Democratic Republic."

Adenauer Invited to Moscow

SOVIET PEACE STEP

On June 7th the Soviet Union invited West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Moscow to discuss the establishment of normal diplomatic, trade and cultural relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic (West Germany). The full text of the Soviet Note is given on the next page.

The Soviet invitation was strongly supported by leaders of the German Democratic Republic. Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl stated:

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic gives its full support to the Soviet step. The Government believes that the establishment of diplomatic, economic and cultural relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic will not only lead to a further relaxation of international tension, which is important for securing peace in Europe, but will also contribute to the reaching of an understanding between Germans, without which the problem of establishing a united free and democratic Germany cannot be solved."

(Full Text of Soviet Note on next page)

"LET'S NORMALISE RELATIONS"

Soviet Note to West Germany

The Government of the Soviet Union has the honour to inform the Government of the German Federal Republic of the following:

The Soviet Government considers that the interests of peace and European security as well as the national interests of the Soviet and German peoples, demand the normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic.

Historical experience teaches us that the preservation and consolidation of peace in Europe depends to a large extent on the existence of normal and good relations between the Soviet and German peoples.

On the other hand, the absence of such relations cannot but cause alarm in Europe and heighten general international tension. Such a situation cannot but favour aggressive forces interested in the maintenance of tension in international relations.

It follows that those who want to preserve and strengthen peace must desire the normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic.

The people of the Soviet Union and of Germany have the greatest interest in such a normalisation of relations between the USSR and the German Federal Republic. As is known, in the years when friendly relations and cooperation existed between our two peoples, both countries derived great advantages from them.

On the other hand, hostile relations and wars between our two peoples in the past brought untold misery and suffering. In two world wars the greatest losses were sufferred by the Soviet and German peoples. The losses suffered by the Soviet and German peoples number millions and are several times the number suffered by all the other states taking part in the war put together.

The results of the wars between our countries were ruined cities, razed villages and the destruction of vast wealth of both peoples.

The Soviet Government must draw the attention of the Government of the Federal Republic to the fact that at the present time in certain aggressive circles of some states plans are afoot to set the Soviet Union and Germany in opposition and to worsen the relations between our two countries.

The carrying out of the plans of these aggressive circles can lead to a new war which would this time unavoidably turn the territory of Germany into a battlefield and result in its annihilation.

Such a war on the territory of Germany, with modern weapons of destruction, would be even more cruel and devastating than all past wars.

We must not allow events to develop along this path.

The threatening danger can be averted if normal relations based on mutual trust and peaceful cooperation are established.

As to the Soviet state, it has never been guided by feelings of revenge against the German people, despite all the suffering which it experienced during the last war.

This is borne out by the position taken up by the Soviet Union, which corresponds to the basic national interests of the German people, in the solution of the German question in the postwar period, as well as by the good relations which have been established between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. These relations are developing on a firm basis of equality of rights and non-interference in internal affairs.

The Soviet Government is guided by the fact that the establishment of normal relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic would contribute to the solution of outstanding problems of concern to the whole of Germany and would thus help the solution of the main national problem in which the German people is interested — the restoration of the unity of the German democratic state.

All this testifies to the fact that normalisation of relations between our two countries is to the full advantage not only of the national interests of Germany and the Soviet Union but also of strengthening peace and security in all other European countries.

The Soviet Government also attaches great importance to the establishment of closer trade relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic.

In this connection, it is worthwhile recalling that the Soviet Union and Germany carried on in the past a large-scale and mutually advantageous trade, with a goods turnover which represented at times one fifth of the total foreign trade both of Germany and of the Soviet Union.

At present the Soviet Union has extensive trade relations with the German Democratic Republic. Trade between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic is of a limited and unstable nature.

With the establishment of normal relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic, grounds would exist for the development of a large-scale exchange of goods and the establishment of mutually advantageous economic relations between them.

The Soviet Union, possessing highly developed industries and an expanding agriculture, considers it possible to raise considerably the level of its trade with Western Germany, which could not fail to be of great importance, especially in the present conditon of growing economic instability in a number of countries.

Cultural links can play a great part in the normalisation of relations between our countries. As is well known, scientific, cultural and technical links between the two countries have an old tradition. These links enriched the spiritual life of both countries and had a beneficial influence on the general development of European culture. These traditions can and must serve the development of scientific, cultural and technical cooperation between the two countries.

The Soviet Government is of the opinion that cancellation of the so-called Occupation Statute for West Germany, which imposed limitations on its foreign political associations, and the law adopted by the Supreme Soviet on cessation of the state of war between the Soviet Union and Germany and restoration of peaceful relations between them

now create the conditions necessary for normalisation and establishment of peaceful relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic.

In this connection, the Soviet Government proposes to the Government of the German Federal Republic the establishment of direct diplomatic and cultural relations between the two countries.

Considering it desirable to establish personal contact between the statesmen of the two countries, the Soviet Government would welcome a visit to Moscow in the near future by the Chancellor of the German Federal Republic, Herr Adenauer, and other representatives the Government of the German Federal Republic would wish to send, to discuss the establishment of diplomatic, cultural and trade relations between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic and the examination of questions connected with this.

DEATH SENTENCE FOR SPIES

The Supreme Court of the German Democratic Republic passed death sentences on June 13th on two members of western militarist rings caught red-handed at their espionage task in East Germany. Two other convicted spies were sentenced to life imprisonment, and three more to long prison terms.

The two men sentenced to death were Wilhelm Lehmann, and Hans Koch. Lehmann had been recruited by agents in West Berlin to organise a spy network in the northern part of the German Democratic Republic, and was actually running three radio stations which had established radio contact with a NATO agent in Copenhagen, Denmark, when he was arrested.

Hans Koch, the other man sentenced to death, had been recruited by the West German spy organisation headed by nazi General Gehlen, and had also established an illegal espionage radio station sending information to West Germany. Koch, who served during the war in an SS unit in occupied France and the Soviet Union, was carrying in his wallet when he was arrested a photograph of Soviet citizens hanged by the nazis.

All the other accused were convicted on evidence showing that they had been engaged in active military espionage against East Germany.

GERMAN CHRISTIANS FOR UNITY

By Guenter Wirth, member of the Central Board of the Christian Democratic Union of the German Democratic Republic

The Christian element is very strong in the West German patriotic movement for reunification and against the inclusion of West Germany in an aggressive military bloc, and this Christian element draws additional strength from the successful Soviet peace policy, for example in the solution of the Austrian problem. Since Christians in West Germany are far removed from wishing to see Germany manoeuvred into military blocs and played off against the Soviet Union, their sympathy for the Soviet peace policy has grown considerably during the last few weeks.

The note of the Soviet Government to the Government of the Federal Republic on June 7th 1955 takes on special importance in this connection, for it has brought actuality into the discussions on a peaceful solution of the German question. A normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic can of itself greatly alter the political atmosphere in West Germany, for psychological warfare against the peace camp and against the Soviet Union in particular has played — and still plays — an important part amongst West German Christians.

Patriotic Christians in West Germany see in the latest Soviet note a confirmation of the correctness of demands already made by them for better relations with the Soviet Union as the way to a peaceful future in a unified Germany.

In this connection two aspects are worthy of mention; in the cultural field, German Protestantism has already done good preparatory work. Martin Niemoeller, Church President of Hesse and President of the German Evangelical Church, visited the Soviet Union three years ago, and last summer an official delegation of the German Evangelical Church visited Moscow and other Soviet cities under the leadership of Dr. Heinemann, who was at that time head of the All-German Synod of the German Evangelical Church. Good relations were established with the Russian Orthodox Church and with the Lutheran churches of the Soviet Baltic Republics.

This spring the Deputy Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Nikolai, visited church insitutions in the Federal Republic on the invitation of the Rhine Evangelical Church. Another delegation of the German Evangelical Church is to visit Moscow this year. Interest in Russian Orthodox theological problems is increasing in West Germany.

That the Catholic Church in the Federal Republic has not acted similarly is due to confessional difficulties. It is nevertheless regrettable that not a single outstanding Catholic personality has expressed a wish to visit the Soviet Union, as the well-known Catholic Mayor of Florence, La Pira, has done. For there are quite enough common problems of a general nature in the Soviet Union which should be of interest to German Catholics.

It is clear that German Christians can only welcome a normalisation of relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union, for in this way not only Church relations themselves could be improved; understanding between the churches can also contribute to improving the general atmosphere between the two peoples.

From a national point of view, it should not be forgotten that as soon as a solution for Austria was in sight, Austrian Christians gave their full support to all efforts at a speedy establishment of Austrian sovereignty. German Christians are no less interested in a rapid peaceful solution of the German question, and it is only to be hoped that they will put up an equally determined and united front at this decisive moment.

Thus the Soviet note raises for German Christians, and especially the Christians in the Federal Republic, the question as to how they can best serve the national interests of their people at this time. They can do this only by adding their voice to the call of our whole people to establish normal relations with the Soviet Union as quickly as possible, as a step towards obtaining normal conditions for Germany as a whole.

NEO NAZIS DENY DEATH CAMPS

"Gas-chambers Never Existed"

— Says West German Paper

On the opposite page we reproduce one of the most infamous newspaper headlines imaginable.

The headline states:

"Now we Reply:
The Dirtiest Falsification of History
For: The Germans never killed, gassed, hanged or shot 6 Million Jews!"

This incredible headline was printed over an article published on January 1st 1955 in the neo-nazi bi-monthly newspaper "Die Anklage" (The Accusation), published at Bad Woerishofen in West Germany. The headline was repeated on January 15th, February 1st and February 15th, over further articles which alleged that the accounts of the systematic nazi liquidation of millions of Jews were an invention from beginning to end.

No legal action has been taken against the newspaper by the West German authorities.

The paper bases its argument mainly upon "investigations" carried out by someone described as "the universally known North American Warwick Hester", who is not otherwise identified.

Here are a few quotations from these articles:

"I visited all the camps in West Germany (after 1945, ed.) which I could reach. In none of these allegedly terrible places of murder did I find gas-chambers or other installations which would have permitted a mass slaughter of human beings. When I visited Dachau, the guide showed me a number of such places, but when inspected more closely it was clear that they had been set up since the war, and were not genuine, but were simply stage-setting." (January 1st 1955)

"Now let us say something about the alleged special gassing vehicles, with which it is claimed that hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Jews had been murdered... Despite the complete occupation of Germany it was not possible to find one of these vehicles. This has quite a simple explanation, Hester stated. Such vehicles did not exist." (January 1st 1955)

"In our last issue we proved that the alleged murder installations were built in Dachau after the end of the war. The fable of the 6 million becomes even more curious and mysterious when one reads in Hester's account the following passage: 'I spoke with 14 Jews who had been interned for a long period in Maidanek Camp... They told me that neither there, nor in the other camps where they had been, had they seen gas chambers or mass executions... In fact the visitors to the camps at Maidanek and Ausschwitz (curiously only a very few, and those mainly Jewish journalists were allowed to visit) were not able to see from close up the alleged liquidation places, and of course not from inside. They were only led by a few buildings which they were told were the gassing installations. After a short time these visits ended, since the camp was going to be destroyed." (January 15th 1955)

In the same instalment an unnamed Jew is quoted, who had been confined by the nazis in various concentration camps, and who after the war spent a short while in a British internment camp where German nazis were detained. He is alleged to have stated:

"In no German camp had he had such terrible treatment as in this British internment camp... His wife and daughter, who had been held in Theresienstadt (concentration camp, ed.)... had not had an agreeable time, since they were otherwise accustomed to a luxurious life, but they had come to no harm, and had in fact been at an advantage, since they had been spared the terrible fear of bombing."

In the February 1st instalment of the article it is claimed that the death rate in the nazi concentration camps was absolutely normal, except that it was somewhat higher for people who had not done hard physical labour for years, or who had lived pampered lives. "This applied particularly to Jews, who were not used to being out in the open air at all seasons of the year."

In the February 15th instalment of the article, a statistical table is given which actually claims that the number of Jews in nazi-occupied Europe increased during the war years from 2,350,000 at the beginning to 2,400,000 at the end.

* * *

It is of course unnecessary to answer these monstrous allegations in detail. One authentic nazi document should be enough. This is the "Korherr Report" (Nuremberg Documents NO 5192-4) which was submitted to SS leader Heinrich Himmler in March 1943, long before the nazi extermination of the Jews had been ended. The report was drawn up by Dr Korherr, Inspector of Statistics to the Reichsfuehrer SS, and consisted of 16 stencilled sheets entitled "The Final Solution of the European Jewish Problem". Detailed statistics were given for the different countries of nazi-occupied Europe up to the end of 1942, and concluded with these words: "Since the seizure of power the number of Jews in Europe, which was over ten millions in 1933, has been halved; the decline of over four millions is due to German influence."

The indictment at the Nuremberg Trial of major war criminals, published on November 20th 1945 stated: "Of the 9,600,000 Jews who lived in the parts of Europe under Nazi domination it is conservatively estimated that 5,700,00 have disappeared, most of them deliberately put to death by the Nazi conspirators."

* * *

What sort of newspaper is "Die Anklage" which publishes this sort of neo-nazi propaganda? It describes itself as "The organ of those damaged and deprived of their rights in the post-war period", and devotes most of its space to the complaints of former nazis who were interned and whose houses were requisitioned by the allies after 1945.

The programme of the paper is summed up in an editorial in the issue of January 1st 1955 which states:

"We demand:

a) release of all German men still held in prison in the west who were sentenced by tribunals of the victors.

b) the constitution of neutral commissions... to control all sentences passed against Germans since 1945, wherever they may have been passed.

c) formal withdrawal by the goverments of all NATO states of the defamatory remarks made about German soldiers from Field Marshalls down to simple grenadiers.

d) the restitution of all the private property taken by the victors from Germans without compensation . . ."

Apart from the appalling series of articles on the concentration camps, almost every issue of the paper contains some items of anti-Semitic propaganda, generally in the form of stories about Jews who have returned to West Germany from wartime emigration and reclaimed their "aryanised" property from "honest Germans".

The tone of the newspaper can be judged from a few headlines: "Denazification — an Offence against Law and honour"; "Driven into the Grave" (The story of a former nazi teacher who committed suicide); "4000 Documents — Declarations of German Men and Women who were Interned between 1945 and 1948".

And the type of reader can be seen from a reader's letter printed in the issue of February 1st 1955:

"Now Die Anklage is publishing extracts from the book 'The High Cost of Vengeance' by the American Freda Utley. It is a good thing that the irresponsible murder of millions of women and children during the war and particularly afterwards by the hypocritical Americans and the snobbish English should now be exposed, and that by a compatriot. Compared with these deeds, the deeds of Hitler were simply children's games . . ."

The letter is signed by Rudolf Kunz, retired foundry director, 17 Rhein-Allee, Dusseldorf, West Germany.

"Die Anklage" is not at present a very influential newspaper in West Germany, and it has a relatively small circulation. But it must be remembered that it is only one of the more outspoken of a whole series of similar newspapers, such as the "Soldatenzeitung" (Soldier's Newspaper); "Stahlhelm" (Steel Helmet); "Wiking-Ruf" (Viking Call — organ of the SS mutual aid association) and many more.

Not only are all these militaristic and neo-fascist newspapers allowed free circulation throughout West Germany (one can subscribe to them through any post office), but their phrases and their arguments are gradually being taken over by many of the mass circulation papers. A few years ago, it was only such extremist papers which were calling for the release of the nazi war criminals, and which coined the word "war-sentencee" to describe them. Today this term has been taken over by most of the large daily newspapers.

And today big daily newspapers like the West Berlin "Tagesspiegel", which receives a large American subsidy, are joining in the chorus of neo-nazis who seek to deny the commission by the nazis of any war crimes at all. On March 26th 1955 this newspaper published a review of the well-known book "The Scourge of the Swastika" by Lord Russell of Liverpool. Here are a few of the things which the review has to say:

"Lord Russell's account . . . is unobjective in a number of important factors, and it is hard to understand why doubtful sources have been used . . . Lord Russell describes the Hitler Youth as 'a body of adolescent fanatics' but this is scarcely true for the entire organisation . . . In dealing with the National Socialist crimes Lord Russell takes the statements of the Germans accused in the war crimes trials at their face value . . . A number of crimes committed in occupied France during the Second World War are described without the criminals being named, and Lord Russell leaves one to assume that German troops committed these crimes . . . This leads to the question as to whether the German war crimes can be judged in isolation. All powers participating in World War Two committed crimes against humanity. Only the German crimes were prosecuted by courts which were often activated by revenge."

Ausgabe A B

Die Anklage

ORGAN DER ENTRECHTETEN NACHKRIEGS[illegible]SCHÄDIGTEN

Und nun antworten wir:

Die gemeinste Geschichtsfälschung

Denn: „Niemals haben Deutsche 6 Millionen Juden getötet, vergast, gehängt oder erschossen!"

(translation)

The Accusation

The Organ of those damaged and deprived of their rights in the post-war period

Now We Reply:

The Dirtiest Falsification of History

For: The Germans never killed, gassed, hanged or shot 6 million Jews!

WIN A NEW READER

Fill in the name and address of a friend, work-mate or acquaintance on the form below, and send it to

Democratic German Report
Friedrichstrasse 167/III
Berlin W 8, Germany

We shall be pleased to mail sample copies of the paper to him or her.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

COMMUNIST BAN TRIAL

Proceedings Summarised

Here is a summary of recent proceedings before the West German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, at which the West German Government is attempting to obtain a ban on the Communist Party (KPD). Summaries of previous proceedings were given in GERMAN REPORT dated December 10th and 24th 1954, March 4th and 18th, April 1st and 29th 1955.

May 31st: Defence Counsel Professor Kroeger requests the court to quash the indictment, since the banning of the KPD would delay or make more difficult the reunification of Germany, which is laid down in the West German Constitution as one of the first aims of West German policy. Court President Dr. Wintrich rejects the application since "Political aspirations have nothing to do with this case"

Prosecuting Attorney Von Winterfeld submits to the court long extracts from speeches by leading statesmen of the German Democratic Republic as evidence against the KPD.

June 1st: Prosecuting Attorney Von Winterfeld submits to the court that the National Front of Democratic Germany is a "subsidiary organisation" of the KPD since there is no contradiction between the public programmes of the two bodies.

June 3rd: Defence Counsel ask for permission to call a number of noted non-Communist witnesses such as Protestant Pastor Martin Niemoeller to testify that they know nothing of any unconstitutional action on the part of the KPD. Communist Fritz Rische tells the court of the sacrifices made by the KPD, and the execution of thousands of members by the nazis. "This proves the role played by the KPD in the fight for democracy and peace" he states. "Then as now it was the KPD which showed the German people how to prevent a war." The court imposes strict time limits on the defence speeches.

June 4th: Defence Counsel Professor Kroeger requests the court to bring hard evidence of unconstitutional acts on the part of the KPD, if it can, instead of providing merely "subjective interpretations of theoretical documents". The court rejects the application.

June 8th: Court President Wintrich rejects all applications made by the defence in the past few days for the quashing of the indictment, for the calling of independent witnesses, etc. Prosecuting Attorney Hopf moves that the taking of evidence be now concluded "since enough proof of the unconstitutional behaviour of the KPD has now been offered to this court". The court adjourned until June 21st 1955.

TRADE UNION BOOK PRIZES

The Free German Trade Union Federation awarded prizes to German writers for books about working people in the German Democratic Republic for the first time this year. Eduard Claudius won first prize for his book, "People on our Side", which describes "new people fighting in the front ranks of socialist construction."

Second prize went to Wolfgang Neuhaus for his book, "Summer Lightning in Wadrina", which gives a "lifelike picture of workers in nationally owned industry putting their hearts into fulfilling the plan and thus helps to develop a socialist consciousness amongst the workers."

Dieter Noll won a prize for "Lady Perlon and other short stories", Jan Koplowitz for his book, "Our Comrade Max the Giant" and Hans Gert Lange for his short story, "Sepp Wenig, Miner."

Holidays for Children

About two million children will enjoy special holidays arranged by the trade unions, schools and other bodies in East Germany this summer, it was announced in Berlin.

600,000 children will go to holiday camps arranged by big factories, 90,000 to camps run by the Young Pioneer organisation, and hundreds of thousands more will take part in tours and camps run by schools. Other children will attend day holiday camps arranged on the outskirts of all big towns.

A total of 25,000 West German children have been invited to holiday camps in East Germany by the government of the German Democratic Republic, and many thousands more West German children have been invited to the factory holiday camps.

The government of the German Democratic Republic has voted the sum of 50 million marks to subsidise children's holiday camps, and very large sums have also been provided by trade unions and from factory funds. The children's parents have to pay only a nominal sum to send children on these holidays. In West Germany, the government has provided only three million marks as subsidy for children's holidays, and the cost of such a holiday is so high that it is out of the reach of millions.

What does a miner earn in East Germany?
Who can go to university?
Is religious instruction given in the schools?

You can find the answers to these and more than 200 other questions in the book "250 Questions and Answers about the German Democratic Republic", published by the Committee for German Unity.

The book is available in English, French, Italian and German. If you would like a free copy, write to us at the address given below, specifying the language desired.

GERMAN REPORT
Friedrichstrasse 167/111
Berlin W 8
Germany.

Berlin After Seventeen Years

By Ernest Platz, Melbourne, Australia

The author of this article visited Berlin recently to attend a meeting of the preparatory committee for the World Conference of Journalists being prepared for a date later this year.

Mr Platz was formerly a German citizen, and a member of the German Social Democratic Party. He was imprisoned in Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1938—39, and then managed to escape from Germany. He has been living in Melbourne, Australia for the past sixteen years, and is now an Australian citizen.

I arrived by air in West Berlin from Australia late at night, so I just looked for the nearest hotel and hit the blanket.

Early next morning I set out for East Berlin, where the meeting of journalists was to take place. Outside my hotel I asked a West Berlin policeman the way to Potsdamer Platz, which I knew to be on the boundary between the two sectors. Our conversation went like this:

"What do you want to do there?"

"Just go for a walk" I replied.

"But, mein Herr, if you once go in there, they won't let you out again. And have you any money with you?"

"Yes," I said, "a little."

"I wouldn't take it there. They will not give it back to you. And, by the way, today is a holiday, but tomorrow morning you come to our political police, in that big building;" and he pointed to it, "he will give you good advice."

Same Police

I asked him, perhaps naively, "Do you think they are the same police officers who worked under the Hitler regime?" And he aswered, "Yes, perhaps some. They are good Germans."

I then took the Underground and without any difficulties I got to Potsdamer Platz and as one who had seen Berlin before I must admit I did not recognize anything. I walked to the Friedrichstrasse in East Berlin quite unmolested and was able to make contact with the person I wanted to see.

In the evening I found the journalist's club and there something struck me — even me — who do not lightly believe propaganda. For years we have read in our Australian papers that only shabbily clad people live in East Germany and they have hardly anything to eat in East Berlin. But here a friendly waitress gave me the choice of fourteen different meals, strawberry cake with cream, ice, in fact everything you would see in any Burke or Elizabeth Street restaurant in Melbourne.

The people were really dressed for the holiday and even if you saw a certain peculiar German cap again and again, you saw a lot of variety in women's dresses and I saw even floral men's shirts.

Full Shops

Next day was an ordinary working day and at ten o'clock in the morning I passed a number of bakers' shops literally loaded with cakes of all kinds. I even felt myself how one can be taken in with propaganda, because I looked and was doubtful what I might see.

The foodshops have a variety of tinned foods which you can't even see in Australia, including all kinds of sausage, big salamis, and everything you expect to see at a grocer's. Trying to write this article I even feel silly that somebody has to mention it. The shops are government owned or co-op shops and many private ones. What struck me was the number of bookshops which I saw in the few big streets which I have so far visited. Also the many flower shops, which by the way are mostly privately owned. Icecream and lollipop and salted roll stands you see at many corners. Motorcars, bicycles and motorbicycles of various kinds you can buy if you have the money. There are first-class displays of cosmetics and in fact, everything you can think of. Perhaps the display of furs had a bigger variety than Collins Street shops in Melbourne and the ordinary girls' frocks are fewer than you would see there.

Workers' Flats

This afternoon I saw the great Stalin Allee, with its gigantic monumental buildings, and between them the thousands of workers' flats. One of the biggest papers asked me what I wanted to see. The editor did not know me and did not ask about my politics but like a colleague anywhere in the world, wanted to help a brother journalist from the antipodes. So I questioned the driver who went with me and he told me that for one of the new flats, two and a half rooms with central heating and bath, he pays 76 East marks.

"This is quite a high rent," he said. "My father, who lives in a one and a half room flat and has tile-stove heating, pays only 38 East marks."

I asked him what he earned, and he told me he earned a little over 500 marks a month, which includes a premium for keeping his car in perfect order. And he showed me with pride the Warsaw and Budapest restaurants. I wish I had space to tell you the varieties of food and drink one can get there; you can get wine and any kind of alcohol, sweets and cakes too.

I challenge the best restaurant in Melbourne city to show a better variety. And this all in that sector where we hear so often that they have nothing to eat.

Anti-Nazi Play

In the evening I had a great experience. The German People's Theatre, completely newly built in the most modern design inside that I have ever seen, put on "The Devil's Circle" by Hedda Zinner. She is Jewish, by the way, and has written a play about the Reichstag fire and how fascism and nazism engineered such incidents to seize power. There you saw the top actors of Germany and the play begins with what was done to the Jews. Then the whole fascist holocaust follows. Our Australian press has often charged that there is anti-Semitism in East Germany, but if there was, why should they put on plays like this?

One thing which made me particularly happy — of the audience, of 1200, 400 were very young people, between 18 and 24, and many of them, like myself, were so moved that you saw the tears running down their cheeks. Many of these young people cannot have experienced themselves what nazism really meant, but they have seen there what this barbaric spirit led to. Later I discussed this matter with one of the actors and he told me that this play has been playing to packed houses for many months. Thousands of West Berliners come to East Berlin to see it.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

The notes which I have been writing on the back page of GERMAN REPORT since the inception of the paper in January 1952 have often been fairly personal, and I hope readers will forgive me if they are even more personal than usual this week.

For I have been celebrating an anniversary. Last week, on June 12th, I celebrated the fifth anniversary of a turning point in my life, of the day in 1950 when I severed my connections with Reuters News Agency, for which I was then working in West Berlin, and came to live and work in the German Democratic Republic.

I have just been looking through some old newspaper cuttings dealing with the press conference which I had the privilege of addressing in the Information Office of the German Democratic Republic on June 12th 1950, and they make interesting reading today. It is very boring, I know, to say "I told you so", but that is what some of the cuttings made me feel like saying.

Here are a few paragraphs from the personal statement which I made on that date which I feel bear repeating today:

"I stand here because I do not wish to serve the warmongers any longer. As a western journalist, chief correspondent in Berlin for Reuters News Agency, I have gradually been becoming, against my will, a tool of the American-controlled war machine . . .

"Every one of you knows, or should know, that Anglo-American occupation policy is slowly but surely aimed at making West Germany the jumping-off ground for a new war. The remilitarisation of West Germany has not yet been officially announced, but it is already in full swing."

I then went on to quote facts which were personally known to me showing the line of western policy at that time, including a remark made to me by General Keightley, at that time Commander of the British Army of the Rhine to the effect that Field Marshal Montgomery had told him 'We must set up a German Army as soon as possible: stupid politicians are still opposed to the plan, but it will not be long now.' General Keightley issued a heated denial of this statement, but later events have robbed his denial of any force which it may once have had.

In the further course of my statement at this press conference I gave other examples of the danger of the renazification and remilitarisation of West Germany, and then continued:

"You may ask me what all this has to do with my decision to appear here at a press conference in the Democratic Sector of Berlin: in passing I should like to say that neither 'Russian gold' nor 'mysterious central Asiatic truth drugs' have played any part in the step I have taken.

"As I said at the beginning of my statement, I simply cannot consent to take part any longer in the warmongering which threatens not only the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, but also is well on the way to converting my motherland, England, into a powerless American colony.

"When I became a correspondent of the Reuter Agency in 1945, I hoped and believed that by giving objective reports from Vienna, Warsaw and Berlin, where I have since been stationed, I could help in a small way the peaceful development of Europe and the world.

"At first it was more or less possible, through I soon noted that important sources of information were closed to me as soon as rumours spread that I was not always an unquestioning supporter of British foreign policy. Over and over again I have had the experience that reports that gave a true picture, for instance of developments in the German Democratic Republic, were never printed."

Incidentally, my last remark was notably confirmed by the way the British press handled the story next day. The "Daily Mirror", "Daily Herald" and "Daily Graphic" almost totally supressed the story, quoting respectively no words, seven words and six words of my statement. The "News Chronicle" carried a sensational story of the press conference, but only four words of the statement, and the "Daily Telegraph" did not carry a news story on the press conference at all.

But there was much more amusement to be found in the way the West Berlin press treated the story. They discovered that I was an "atom bomb spy", and that the British Secret Service was hot on my tracks. This yarn was so ridiculous that the British authorities were forced to issue an official denial. Then a little later another West Berlin newspaper discovered that I had been sent to a mental hospital, and debated in a leading article whether I had been mad all along, or whether my experiences in East Germany had sent me mad.

But enough of this leafing through old newspaper cuttings. Here in the German Democratic Republic I have seen the development of the first really democratic state in German history, and like millions of other people all over the world I have noted with growing concern the steps being taken to remilitarise West Germany.

The remilitarisation did not go ahead as quickly as looked likely five years ago, thanks to the determined opposition of the mass of the people in almost all West European countries, including large sections of the people in West Germany. And now, thanks to the efforts of all those millions who have fought for peace so consistently, it looks for the first time since the war as though real steps may be taken in the next few months to relax tension in Europe, and to reach at least a working solution of the German problem.

And that is really something worth achieving.

* * *

Readers of GERMAN REPORT will be interested to know that the radio of the German Democratic Republic has commenced with English-language broadcasts. At the moment the transmissions are only on short waves (41.96 metres, 7150 kilocycles; and 49.06 metres, 6115 kilocycles). Times of transmission are 8 p.m., 10.30 p.m. and 12.30 am, British Summer Time and Central European time. GMT is one hour earlier.

We should be very pleased to hear from readers in various parts of the world as to whether the broadcasts are clearly audible, and what they think of the programmes. All such information will be passed on to the programme planners and radio engineers here.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8. Telephone 22 62 68. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik